

Written testimony of Tracy Choomack, Homeless Ally  
Before the Judiciary Committee  
March 13, 2013

Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Tracy Choomack and I am here today to urge that you support H.B. 6572, *An Act Concerning Intimidation Based on Bigotry or Bias Against Homeless People*, and take action to protect individuals experiencing homelessness against violence and hate. I am a concerned citizen residing in Hartford, CT, and have been victim to street violence. I had nothing of value on me, I was dressed plainly, and had no affiliation with drug trade or any sort of activity that one might imagine to be reason to create these scenes. I was simply walking by myself, in the evening, by my home. I was simply minding my own business: and attacked by three teenage boys. They slammed my head into the pavement and ran off. I truly believe it was for no other reason than thrill seeking. I tell you this because I was fortunate. I was able to pick myself up and go to where I could lock the door behind me. I had somewhere to go to feel safe. The police believed me. I could lay my head to rest. I think about that instance as an incredibly fortunate outcome to circumstances that happen daily--and without the resources I had. People experiencing homelessness face this terror every day. They walk the streets, minding their own business day in and day out. They have no door to lock behind them. They have no place to feel safe. The police don't believe them—and law does not recognize them. Worse, people experiencing homelessness face the stigma that this mistreatment is deserving. Aggressors seek out individuals experiencing homelessness as an easy, deserving target; as a subhuman population. Violent acts are being committed on the streets of Connecticut. Please support Bill 6572 and protect our homeless citizens with the same dignity we all deserve.

Sincerely,

Tracy Choomack